



**Governor's Office of
Homeland Security &
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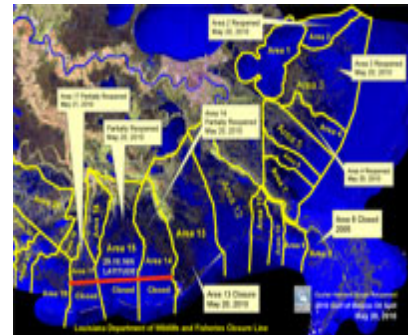
May 20, 2010

**In Precautionary Move, DHH Closes Oyster Harvesting
Area 13 Due to Oil Spill**

Officials Continue Aggressive Testing

BATON ROUGE - The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals announced today the closure of oyster harvesting bed Area 13 as a precautionary response to the BP oil spill in the Gulf.

The closure is west of the Mississippi River in Lafourche and Jefferson parishes.



DHH Secretary Alan Levine and State Health Officer Dr. Jimmy Guidry signed the closure order, which will take effect at sunset today, Thursday, May 20, 2010. [Click on the map to view full size](#)

DHH officials have been working closely with local, state and federal agencies to monitor the oil plume that continues to grow off of the Louisiana coastline for its potential impacts on oyster harvesting areas. Meanwhile, employees with DHH's Office of Public Health Molluscan Shellfish Program have continued regular testing of 8 million acres of coastal waters along the Louisiana shoreline.

In addition, DHH scientists and engineers are conducting enhanced testing of oyster meat taken from the closed beds to monitor the presence of oil, called hydrocarbon testing. Additional testing is also being conducted in unaffected oyster beds. These tests will create a baseline, which will be used to ensure the safety of oysters once the incident clears in order to reopen beds. Oysters being

harvested in open areas are considered safe.

Areas 8 and 28 remain closed. Areas 2 through 7 and portions of areas 14, 15 and 17 north of the 29.10.16 N latitude line were recently reopened.

Closures will remain in effect until officials have determined that environmental conditions are within the requirements specified by the National Shellfish Sanitation Program.

The public is encouraged to call a toll-free hotline, 1-800-256-2775, to report the presence of oil or an oil sheen.

For more information related to the oil spill, visit <http://www.emergency.louisiana.gov>. Connect with us on www.facebook.com/GOHSEP and on Twitter @GOHSEP. View photos in from the state's response efforts at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/lagohsep>.

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